

Message Text

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SUBJ: SELECTION OF COMPUTER SYSTEM FOR ACE CENTRAL REGION

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING IS UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF A NEWS ARTICLE BY ADELBERT WEINSTEIN WHICH APPEARED ON PAGE ONE OF 21 FEB 76 FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG (FAZ), HEADLINED QUOTE STANDARDIZATION--DREAM AND REALITY END QUOTE. MR. WEINSTEIN IS CHIEF CORRESPONDENT ON SECURITY AFFAIRS FOR THE FAZ. HE IS CONSIDERED HIGHLY CONSERVATIVE ON DEFENSE CONCEPTS AND A STALWART SUPPORTER OF NATO. HE IS ONE OF GERMANY'S MOST HIGHLY REGARDED DEFENSE ANALYSTS. HIS ARTICLE DEALS WITH US/GERMAN COMPETITION IN THE SELECTION OF A COMPUTER SYSTEM FOR THE ACE COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM IN THE CENTRAL REGION, TOUCHES UPON COMPETITION BETWEEN US AND GERMAN TANKS, AND MENTIONS LACK OF STANDARDIZATION IN THE US ROLAND MISSILE SYSTEM. HE URGES OBJECTIVITY AND REALISM IN DECISIONS, AND HE DECRIES THE GENERATION OF POLITICAL TENSION TO COMPENSATE FOR SHORTCOMINGS IN CAPABILITY OF THE GERMAN COMPUTER SYSTEM. END SUMMARY.

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QUOTE: THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP OF NATO IS FACING AN IMPORTANT DECISION: A JOINT COMPUTER CENTER IS TO BE BUILT FOR THE ATLANTIC HEADQUARTERS IN CASTEAU AND THE SUPREME COMMAND IN BRUNSSUM. THE COMPUTER IS AN INDISPENSABLE TOOL FOR MAKING

MILITARY DECISIONS IN MODERN ARMIES. IT COLLECTS AND STORES THE INFORMATION. ITS CLASSIFYING MECHANICAL BRAIN IS THE ONLY INSTRUMENT WITH WHICH THE INFORMATION LEADING TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS CAN BE EVALUATED, FOR THE KNOWLEDGE AND FACTS SUPPLIED BY THE TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE DEVICES ARE SO NUMEROUS THAT A ROBOT IS REQUIRED TO FILTER OUT WHAT IS ESSENTIAL.

LAST WEEKEND, SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS OF THE HEADQUARTERS CONCERNED HAD FIRST TALKS ABOUT PRACTICAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE NEW SYSTEM (THERE HAVE BEEN PREPARATORY POLITICO-MILITARY CONTACTS FOR SOME TIME). THE CHOICE IS BETWEEN A GERMAN AND AN AMERICAN COMPUTER SYSTEM. THE EXPERTS ARE AGREED THAT THE GERMAN AS WELL AS THE AMERICAN FIRM ARE OFFERING HIGH QUALITY. SOME EXPERTS EVEN CONCLUDE THAT THE GERMANS HAVE THE BETTER SYSTEM. HOWEVER, IN THE CASE OF SUCH A COMPLEX SYSTEM, THE TECHNICAL LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT IS NOT THE ONLY CRITERION. THE AMERICANS ARE ADDITIONALLY ABLE TO SUPPLY INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE IN A HANDY FORM. TOGETHER WITH THE HARDWARE, THEY MAKE AVAILABLE THE METHODOLOGY OF ITS USE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE COMPETITOR FROM OVERSEAS DEMONSTRATES A DUAL INTELLECTUAL EFFORT: THE EQUIPMENT PLUS THE KNOW-HOW. IT WILL TAKE THE GERMANS THREE YEARS TO CATCH UP WITH THIS ADVANCE.

THE BLAME FOR THIS BACKWARDNESS MUST BE PLACED ON SOME (RETIRED) GENERALS. WHILE INDUSTRY CAN MANUFACTURE TECHNICAL MEANS FOR COMMAND AND CONTROL PURPOSES, IT IS THE SOLDIERS WHO DETERMINE THE METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES. THEY HAVE TO DRAFT THE NECESSARY RULES. IT IS STILL AN OPEN QUESTION WHETHER THE AMERICANS OR THE GERMANS WILL SUCCEED IN GETTING THEIR EQUIPMENT ADOPTED. NOR IS IT CERTAIN THAT--AS PLANNED--THE DECISION WILL BE TAKEN AT THE BEGINNING OF MARCH, BECAUSE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE COMPUTER SYSTEM THREATENS TO BECOME A POLITICAL QUESTION. SINCE THE ASSIGNMENT OF A COMMAND AND CONTROL INSTRUMENT TO THE HEADQUARTERS IS BOUND TO HAVE A SECONDARY EFFECT ON THE SUBORDINATE MILITARY AUTHORITIES, ALL NATO NATIONS MUST BE ASKED FOR THEIR VIEWS. IT IS NOT YET KNOWN IN WHAT WAY THEY WILL CAST THEIR VOTES. THE BRITISH ARE SAID TO BE IN FAVOR OF THE BEST SYSTEM, WHILE THE NORWEGIANS AND DANES SEEM TO SUPPORT THE AMERICAN COMPUTER.

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THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM SHOW A PREFERENCE FOR THE GERMAN EQUIPMENT. APART FROM THIS, HOWEVER, THEY SAY THAT WHAT COUNTS IS THE DATA HANDLING CAPABILITY.

THE GERMAN MILITARY EXPERTS NOW INTEND TO COMPENSATE BY MEANS OF A POLITICAL OFFENSIVE FOR THE BACKWARDNESS FROM WHICH OUR SYSTEM SUFFERS OWING TO THE LACK OF THE NECESSARY SOFTWARE COMPARED WITH THE US MODEL. THE FEDERAL MINISTER OF DEFENCE IS TO BE ASKED TO INTERVENE. HOWEVER, LET ME EXPRESS A WARNING. AS IMPORTANT AS ORDERS OF THIS MAGNITUDE MAY BE, THERE IS NO REASON TO CAUSE POLITICAL TENSION ARTIFICIALLY WITHIN NATO SIMPLY BECAUSE THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE GOOD ONE'S OWN OMISSIONS. SUCH AN ACT WOULD HAVE REPERCUSSIONS ON FUTURE DECISIONS ABOUT STANDARDIZATION PLANS WITHIN NATO.

IN THE COURSE OF THIS YEAR, THE AMERICANS WANT TO CARRY OUT A COMPARATIVE TEST BETWEEN TWO OF THEIR TANK MODELS AND THE GERMAN LEOPARD. SHOULD THE LEOPARD WIN, THE PENTAGON WOULD BE PREPARED TO ADOPT IT AS THE NEW STANDARD BATTLE TANK FOR THE US FORCES. BONN WOULD BE WELL ADVISED--ESPECIALLY WITH A VIEW TO THESE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS--TO DEAL WITH THE MATTER OF THE COMMAND AND CONTROL COMPUTER SYSTEM AS OBJECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE.

HOWEVER, THE GERMAN HOPES CONCERNING THE OUTCOME OF THE TANK BATTLE SHOULD NOT BE EXAGGERATED EITHER. THERE IS THE DETERRENT EXAMPLE OF THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN ANY ATTEMPT AT STANDARDIZATION: THE US FORCES HAVE BOUGHT THE GERMAN-FRENCH WEAPON SYSTEM ROLAND II, A GROUND-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEM. THE PENTAGON WANTED TO ECONOMIZE ON DEVELOPMENT COSTS, BUT A PERFECTED SYSTEM, AND ALSO EQUIP THE 7TH US ARMY IN GERMANY WITH A WEAPON WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THE NEIGHBOURING ARMIES. BUT WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE WHOLE PROJECT? THE AMERICAN MILITARY SIDE INSISTED UPON SO MANY MODIFICATIONS--FROM CARRIER VEHICLE TO THE COMPUTER AND THE LOADING OF THE MISSILE--THAT ROLAND II CANNOT BE DELIVERED TO THE US FORCES UNTIL FIVE YEARS FROM NOW. THE CONGRESS WILL HARDLY AGREE TO ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO USE MAJOR EUROPEAN EQUIPMENT.

THIS SITUATION CLEARLY ILLUMINATES ONE THING: ONE SHOULD NOT ONLY ACCUSE THE POLITICIANS OF OBSTRUCTING STANDARDIZATION. IT IS NOT ALWAYS THE FEAR OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS THAT DECIDE WHAT IS TO BE PROCURED FOR THE NATIONAL ARMED FORCES, AND WHEN THIS IS TO BE PROCURED. NOR IS IT ALWAYS THE

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PRESSURE OF INDUSTRY AND THE FIGHT OF THE TRADE UNIONS FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF JOBS WHICH IS TO BE BLAMED. THE VANITY OF THE FORCES, THE ARROGANCE OF MANY MILITARY EXPERTS AS WELL AS THEIR MISTAKES SLOW DOWN ATLANTIC STANDARDIZATION.

END QUOTE.STREATOR

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